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Williams, Michael Ann - Collector (MSS 691)

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Descriptive Inventory

MSS 691 WILLIAMS, Michael Ann – Collector

1 box. 15 folders. 65 items, 1917-1999. Originals and photocopies

SC2018.102.2

COLLECTION NOTE

While teaching at Western Kentucky University in the Folk Studies and Anthropology Department, Michael Ann Williams wrote a book in 2006 titled: *Staging Tradition: John Lair and Sarah Gertrude Knott* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press). This collection contains some of the research material she amassed about John Lair (1894-1985) and Renfro Valley, the entertainment venue for folk and traditional music which he started in 1937. The show spawned from the popularity of the National Barn Dance—produced at Chicago’s WLS radio station—at which Lair had performed.

Folder 1 includes this inventory to the collection. Folder 2 contains correspondence produced by Williams’ graduate assistants Larry Morrissey and Brian Gregory, as they approached people, particularly Renfro Valley performers, about Lair and his influence. Folder 3 includes news clippings about Lair and genealogical information. Folder 4 houses a photocopy of a certificate recognizing Lair’s promotion to Sergeant in the U.S. Army and an application for military records. Folder 5 contains a program, advertisements, and news clippings related to “Atta Boy,” a musical in which Lair participated in 1918. Folder 6 includes testimony given by Lair in support of Louisville radio station WHAS, but in reality is a history of his effort to start and promote his radio show from Renfro Valley. Folder 7 includes a printed interview with Lair conducted by Loyal Jones and published in the *Old-Time Herald* (Nov. 90 – Jan. 91). Folder 8 contains a transcription of an interview done with Virginia Sutton Bray by Loyal Jones about the early years of the Renfro Valley Barn Dance radio program. Folder 9 includes photocopied news clippings and photographs of Patty Flye and her family, who also performed at Renfro Valley. Folder 10 includes a thesis by Lisa J. Yager titled “Banjo Pickin’ Girl: Representing Lily May Ledford.” Lily May performed with a group known as the Coon Creek Girls at Renfro Valley. At various times, several of Ledford’s sisters sang or played with the Coon Creek Girls. Folder 11 includes an interview with Evelyn “Daisy” Lange Perry conducted by Lisa Yarger. A fiddler, Evelyn, was one of the original Cook Creek Girls, and she performed at Renfro Valley. Folder 12 includes miscellaneous material about other Renfro Valley performers. This folder is arranged alphabetically by the performer’s surname: Manuel D. Clark, Jr. (Old Joe Clark), Jonell Fisher, Henry Hayes, Kenneth Barns, Ralph W. Marcum, and Hazel Farmer Martin. Some photographic negatives and a photo log of the same is contained in Folder 13. Brian Gregory’s paper “I’m So Anxious to See Renfro Valley”: Traditional Music, Modern Architecture, and the Semiotics of Attraction at an Early Site of Auto Tourism” can

be found in Folder 14. Folder 15 includes a report about the historic properties at Renfro Valley titled "An Historical Survey and Analysis of Renfro Valley Entertainment, Inc. Properties and Surrounding Properties" prepared by Mary C. Breeding in 1989.

SHELF LIST

BOX 1	Research material related to John Lair and Renfro Valley	1918-1999	65 items
Folder 1	Inventory		1 item
Folder 2	Correspondence about John Lair	1997-1998	11 items
Folder 3	News clippings and articles about John Lair	1940-1996	16 items
Folder 4	Army records of John Lair	1917-1996	3 items
Folder 5	Information on the show "Atta Boy"	1918	6 items
Folder 6	John Lair testimony for WHAS from Berea College on April 29, 1946	1946	1 item
Folder 7	"Interviews with John Lair" by Loyal Jones from "Old Time Herald"	1991	1 item
Folder 8	Interview with Virginia Sutton Bray conducted by Loyal Jones; Bray performed at Renfro Valley	1994	1 item
Folder 9	Correspondence, news clippings, and photos of Patty Flye, who performed with her family at Renfro Valley	1927-1997	12 items
Folder 10	Thesis by Lisa J. Yarger: "Banjo Pickin' Girl: Representing Lily May Ledford"	1997	1 item
Folder 11	Interview with Evelyn "Daisy" Lange Perry by Lisa Yarger, Perry performed at Renfro Valley	1993-1994	2 items
Folder 12	Miscellaneous material about various Renfro Valley performers	1986-1998	6 items
Folder 13	Negatives and photo index for images from the Country Music Foundation	1996	2 items

Folder 14	Paper titled "I'm So Anxious to See Renfro Valley" by Brian Gregory	1999	1 item
Folder 15	"An Historical Survey and Analysis of Renfro Valley Entertainment, Inc. Properties and Surrounding Properties" by Mary C. Breeding	1989	1 item

BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD

MSS WILLIAMS, Michael Ann – 1918-1999
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Research material, including news clippings, promotional material, interviews, reports and miscellaneous printed items related to John Lair and the operations and performers at Renfro Valley, Kentucky. Collected by Michael Ann Williams for a book she wrote about Lair and Sarah Gertrude Knott.

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SUBJECT ANALYTICS

Albright, Marie Matilda (Roysten), 1908-2004 F2
 "Atta Boy" (drama) F5
 Banjo players F10
 Bray, Virginia (Sutton), 1934-2019 (Informant) F8
 Breeding, Mary Caufield F15
 Byrd, Gerald Lester "Jerry," 1920-2005 F2
 Coon Creek Girls (band) – Relating to F10
 Country music
 Flye, Patty, b. 1930 – Relating to F9
 Folk music
 Gregory, Brian F14
 Historic buildings – Renfro Valley F14-15
 Jones, Loyal, b. 1928 (Interviewer) F7-8
 Knapp Family (band)
 Lair, John Lee, 1894-1985
 Ledford, Lily May, 1917-1985 – Relating to F10
 Morrissey, Larry – Correspondence F2-3,9
 Music and musicians
 Perry, Evelyn Lange "Daisy" (Informant) F11

Renfro Valley Entertainment, Inc. – Renfro Valley
Rockcastle County
WHAS Radio – Relating to F6
Yarger, Lisa J. F10-11

SEE and SEE ALSO

Meece, Virginia (Sutton) Bray, 1934-2019
See also:
Bray, Virginia (Sutton), 1924-2019

Peavey, Patty Flye, b. 1930
See also:
Flye, Patty, b. 1930

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